

## **With Humour and Hope: Learning From Our Mothers' Depression and Alcoholism**

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### **Chapter Summaries**

#### **Chapter One: My Story**

This provides some background on my life, and my mother's, and some insights I've taken from her life, and sadly, what I learned from her death. The chapter affirms my commitment to making changes in order to live a longer and healthier life. Accepting the fact that my mother was depressed and an alcoholic is very difficult. Having to accept that I am clinically depressed and have a predisposition to alcoholism is equally difficult. Trying to have the courage to change what I can; recognizing the differences between the things I can change, and the things that I can't poses a challenge, but it is one that I believe I can meet.

What do we learn from our past?

How does this affect our future?

#### **Chapter Two: Are We Doomed to Repeat the Past?**

My story continues, but this chapter focuses more on the stories of other women. They share their pain of living with a depressed and/or alcoholic mother or father; their own struggles with depression and alcohol (or other substances); and their hopes of breaking the patterns of these illnesses for their own children. They describe the ways they have overcome the demons from their past and how they look forward to a healthier future.

Will we all become sad alcoholics?

Are there ways to predict if we will suffer from depression?

#### **Chapter Three: Some Definitions That May Help**

Everyone gets depressed at times. It's part of the human condition, and it probably happens to animals too. We do feel sad, angry, and lethargic from time to time. It is a normal reaction to tragic or upsetting circumstances. If these periods of sadness do not go away after a couple of weeks, or if they keep recurring, then you are said to be suffering from depression. How do you tell the difference? What is the difference between the social drinker and the alcoholic? This chapter outlines some of the definitions of depression used by doctors, and some charts describing some of the influences affecting our behaviour and these illnesses.

How can we tell if we are depressed?

Are there safe levels for drinking alcohol?

#### **Chapter Four: Under The Influence**

Popular culture influences society, and our behaviour, but to what extent? This chapter looks at the prevalence of alcohol and drugs in popular culture, especially in music and movies, and the effects pop culture has on behaviour and on society's attitudes toward these substances.

Included are summaries of popular movies: from "The Valley of The Dolls" to "Traffic", and some thoughts on how artists view the use of drugs and alcohol in their craft, and their lives.

How does the presence of alcohol and drugs in popular culture affect society?

How have our attitudes toward these substances changed in the past 40 years?

### **Chapter Five: Eat, Drink, and Be Merry**

Food affects mood, and mood affects what we choose to eat, or not eat. Food cravings can be as addictive as cravings for other substances. There are healthy choices we can make. There are ways to make sure that we control what we eat, and not the other way around, in order to affect our moods. This chapter shows that it is possible to eat, drink, and be merry.

Does food affect mood?

Why do women crave chocolate?

### **Chapter Six: Moving Forward**

This chapter discusses the benefits of support groups and various forms of therapy to help maintain a healthy lifestyle. These therapies include psychotherapy, yoga, reiki, massage, and chiropractic. There are also more personal stories of dealing with past episodes of depression and ways of becoming stronger and healthier. In the end, it is all about self-acceptance, which comes about more easily with a healthy sense of humour!

What are the benefits of both conventional and alternative therapies for staying healthy?

Why is humour important for good mental health?

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